(c) how far it has adversely effected the fertility of agricultural land, water resources and breathing of the human being and animals; and

(d) whether an International Committee of experts has been set up to find out the means for the protection of agriculture, water resources, human being and other living creatures?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Surface air temperatures over the India for the period 1901-2000 indicate a significant warming of about 0.5°C/100 year during the last century. The ten warmest years on record are 2006(0.595), 2002(0.59), 1998(0.50), 2004 & 2001(0.47), 2003(0.45), 1958(0.43), 1987 & 1941(0.41), 2005(0.40), 1999(0.39) 1953 & 2000(0.36) and 1980(0.34). The figures within brackets are the differences from the long term mean. Since 1993, annual mean temperature has been consistently above normal. The year 2006 was the warmest year on record since 1901. The year 2001 was warmer by 0.55°C. The assessment for the year 2008 will be available only by the end of the year. The spatial distribution of temperature changes indicate that a significant warming trend has been observed along the west coast, central India, and interior Peninsula and over northeast India. However, cooling trend has been observed in northwest and some parts in southern India. These observed trends are based on Instrumental records over the past more than 100 years, collected by the India Meteorological Department.

(c) No specific National assessment has been carried out on how far increase in global warming has adversely affected the various natural and biological resources. However, the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provides observed changes in the natural systems at global level (snow, ice and frozen grounds) are affected. Further, the Report also projects current understanding of future impacts and projects global and regional level changes e.g. increased risk extinction on plants and animals; changed patterns of distribution of some diseases (malaria and dengue); sea level rise; variable response of crop production depending upon the physical locations of countries; besides providing regional impacts in the major regions of the world including Asia.

(d) A Committee of Experts under the Chairmanship of Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India has been constituted to study the impacts of climate and adaptation to Climate Change in India.

Damage by plastic in environment

233. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has assessed the extent of damage caused by plastic in environment;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the details of the steps taken/being taken by Government for the protection of environment; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor, and how far the public shall suffer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) A monograph entitled "Plastics for Environment and Sustainable Development" was published in 2003 by the Indian Centre for Plastics in the Environment, Mumbai and the Central Institute of Plastics Engineering & Technology, Chennai, an autonomous institution of the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers, which

comprehensively assesses issues concerning Sustainability of plastics as materials and their impact on the environment. Plastics are generally chemically inert. However, the indiscriminate littering of plastics and environmentally unsound recycling practices have the potential to cause adverse impacts on environment and health.

The Government of India has notified the Plastics Manufacture Sale and Usage Rules, 1999 amended 2003 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. As per these rules, manufacture, stocking distribution, or selling of carry bags made of virgin or recycled plastic which are less than 20 x 30 cms in size and 20 microns thickness is banned. These rules also prohibit use of recycled plastic bags and containers for storing, carrying, dispensing or packaging of foodstuffs. Further, units manufacturing carry bags or containers made of virgin and recycled plastics are required to register with the concerned State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) or Pollution Control Committee (PCC) prior to the commencement of production.

As per information made available by State Pollution Control Boards, the States like Maharashtra, Punjab, Chandigarh, Kerala, Meghalaya and Goa have laid down stricter norms than prescribed with regard to thickness of plastic bags *viz.* 50, 30, 30, 30, 40 and 40 microns respectively. The State of Himachal Pradesh has banned carrry bags made of non biodegradable material of thickness less than 70 microns and size less than 18 x 12 inches. The Government of West Bengal has banned the manufacture, use, storage and sale of plastic carry bags of thickness below 40 microns and of size 16 x 12". Further the States of Gujarat, Orissa and Goa has banned use of plastic bags in certain religious and tourist places like Ambaji, Dakor, Somnath in Gujarat and municipal area of Puri and Konark in Orissa. The concerned State Governments and the Union Territory Administrations are monitoring the implementation.

Land for Sabrimala Pilgrims

234. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the forest land demanded by the Dedvasthan Board for use of Sabrimala pilgrims;

(b) details of land released so far;

(c) reasons for not sanctioning the total land demanded for, by the State;

(d) whether any study has been conducted on the minimum need of land for the use of pilgrims in Sabrimala;

(e) if so, details thereof; and

(f) the steps Government proposes to take to provide adequate amenities for pilgrims?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) The Travancore Devaswom Board had demanded an area of 500 ha. of forest land (falling in the Periyar Tiger Reserve and Ranni Forest Division) for Sabrimala pilgirm facilitation.

(b) The details of forest land given to Travancore Devanswom Board for Sabrimala pilgrim facilitation are at given in the enclosed Statement. (*See* below).

(c) to (e) Based on discussions with the Travancore Devaswom Board representatives